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September 5, 2002
Amrita J. Hala 9/5/2002
SIGNATURE DATE

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE.

Applicant : Ralph Frisch
Serial No. : 09/676,237
Filing Date : September 29, 2000
For : FASTENER FOR SECURING
A GAS BAG MODULE TO A
STEERING WHEEL
Group Art Unit : 3618
Examiner : F. Fleming
Attorney Docket No. : TRW(ASG) 5545
Assistant Commissioner for Patents
Washington, D.C. 20231

LETTER

Sir:

I am the Attorney for the Applicant and I was notified on
August 28, 2002 that the amendment, check and drawing
amendment originally mailed on October 8, 2001 were not
received by the Examiner for the above-identified patent
application.


A copy of the return postcard date stamped by the PTO
mailroom is being submitted as evidence to show proof of
receipt of the amendment, check, and drawing amendment by the
Patent and Trademark Office on October 10, 2001. A copy of
the check, drawing amendment, and amendment originally mailed
on October 8, 2001 is also enclosed with this letter.

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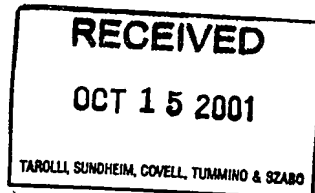
Please charge any deficiency or credit any overpayment in
the fees for this amendment to our Deposit Account
No. 20-0090.

Respectfully submitted,


Thomas L. Tarolli
Reg. No. 20,177

TAROLLI, SUNDHEIM, COVELL,
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Date Mailed 10/8/01 Item Amendment

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Applicant
Frisch

Serial No.
09/676,237

Please find attached to this postcard one check for \$252.00,
one Amendment (10 pgs), one Proposed Drawing Amendment
(2 pgs) and one sheet of amended Fig. 1.

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TRW (ASG) 5545



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TLT/RES/jmw
TRW(ASG) 5545

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October 8, 2001

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October 8, 2001

Jim Wolf
SIGNATURE

10-8-01
DATE

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Applicant : Ralph Frisch
Serial No. : 09/676,237
Filing Date : September 29, 2000
For : FASTENER FOR SECURING A GAS BAG
MODULE TO A STEERING WHEEL
Group Art Unit : 3618
Examiner : F. Fleming
Attorney Docket No. : TRW(ASG)5545
Cleveland, Ohio 44114-1400

Assistant Commissioner for Patents
Washington, D.C. 20231

AMENDMENT

Sir:

In response to the Office Action dated July 6, 2001,
reconsideration of the above-identified application in view of
the present amendment is respectfully requested.

IN THE SPECIFICATION:

Page 3, the paragraph beginning at line 17 is amended as
follows:

Referring now to Fig. 1, there is illustrated a fastener
10 in accordance with the invention which connects a
component, e.g., the inflator mount 12 of a gas bag module 11
to a fastener part 14 secured, e.g., to a steering wheel 13 by
a snap-action connection. The fastener 10 comprises two

fastening arms 16 preferably made of a plastics material which end in hooks 18. In the connected condition which is shown, the hooks 18 clasp the fastener part 14 in such a manner that the flat or slightly convex upper sides 20 contact a corresponding undercut, preferably concave surface area 22 on the fastener part 14. In this condition, the inflator mount 12 is locked in place against tension in the direction of the arrow A away from the steering wheel.

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel claims 13-15 without prejudice.

Please add claims 16-19 as follows:

16. Apparatus comprising:

a gas bag module including an inflator mount and two fastening arms configured integrally with said inflator mount; and

a fastener part configured integrally with a steering wheel,

said fastening arms entering into a snap-action connection with said fastener part and clasping said fastener part in a connected condition to connect said gas bag module and said inflator mount with the steering wheel,

said fastening arms comprising hooks having contact surface areas and said fastener part comprising a concave contact surface area into which said contact surface areas of said hooks engage in said connected condition.

17. Apparatus comprising:

a gas bag module including an inflator mount and two fastening arms configured integrally with said inflator mount; and

a fastener part configured integrally with a steering wheel,

said fastening arms entering into a snap-action connection with said fastener part and clasping said fastener part in a connected condition to connect said gas bag module and said inflator mount with the steering wheel,

said fastener part and said fastening arms comprising ramps corresponding to each other.

18. Apparatus comprising:

a gas bag module including an inflator mount and two fastening arms configured integrally with said inflator mount; and

a fastener part configured integrally with a steering wheel,

said fastening arms entering into a snap-action connection with said fastener part and clasping said fastener part in a connected condition to connect said gas bag module and said inflator mount with the steering wheel,

said fastening arms comprising hooks having contact surface areas and said fastener part comprising a contact surface area into which said contact surface areas of said hooks engage in said connected condition,

said fastener part and said fastening arms comprising ramps corresponding to each other,

said ramps of said fastener part including an angle and said hooks sliding back towards the apex of said angle should the connection fail to be made.

19. Apparatus comprising:

a gas bag module including an inflator mount having two fastening arms, said inflator mount and said fastening arms being formed from a first continuous piece of material and not two pieces joined together; and

a fastener part configured integrally with a steering wheel, said fastener part and said steering wheel being formed from a second continuous piece of material and not two pieces joined together;

said fastening arms entering into a snap-action connection with said fastener part and clasping said fastener part in a connected condition to connect said gas bag module and said inflator mount with the steering wheel.

REMARKS

Reconsideration of the above-identified application is in view of the present amendment is respectfully requested.

By the present amendment, claims 13-15 have been canceled. Claims 16-19 have been added. Claims 7-12 and 16-19 are currently pending in the application.

The Applicant acknowledges with appreciation the Examiner's indication that claims 7-11 are allowed. The Applicant also acknowledges with appreciation the Examiner's indication that claims 14 and 15 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form and including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claim. Applicant has rewritten claims 14 and 15 in independent form. Claim 17 is claim 14 rewritten. Claim 18 is claim 15 rewritten minus the limitation that the fastener part comprises a contact surface area which is "concave".

Claims 12 and 13 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,350,190 to Szigethy. To constitute anticipation under §102(b), each and every element of the claim must be found in a single prior art reference (MPEP §2131).

Claim 12 is directed to an apparatus including a gas bag module including an inflator mount and two fastening arms configured integrally with the inflator mount. Claim 12 also recites a fastener part configured integrally with the steering wheel. Claim 12 further recites that the fastening arms enter into a snap action connection with the fastener

part and clasp the fastener part in a connected condition to connect the gas bag module and the inflator mount with the steering wheel.

Claim 12 is patentable over the prior art and especially over the patent to Szigethy. Specifically, the patent to Szigethy does not disclose or suggest two fastening arms configured integrally with an inflator mount. The fastening arms 64 of Szigethy are connected to a mounting connector 12 which is not an integral part of the inflator mount 24 (see Fig. 3 of Szigethy). The connector 12 is a separate piece. (See e.g., Figs. 1 and 2). The present invention has a direct connection between the inflator mount and a fastener part integral with the steering wheel without a separate intermediate connector. In addition, the fastener arms 64 of Szigethy clasp directly to the steering wheel and not to a fastener part integral with the steering wheel. Thus, as the patent to Szigethy does not include each and every element of claim 12, claim 12 should be allowable.

Claim 16 is claim 13 rewritten in independent form. Claim 13 is patentable over the prior art and especially over the patent to Szigethy. The patent to Szigethy does not show the fastener part 14 with a concave surface into which contact surface areas of the fastening arms 64 engage. Thus, claim 16 should be allowable.

Claim 19 recites a gas bag module including an inflator mount having two fastening arms. The inflator mount and the fastening arms are formed from a first continuous piece of material and not two pieces joined together. Claim 19 also

recites a fastener part configured integrally with a steering wheel. The fastener part and the steering wheel are formed from a second continuous piece of material and not two pieces joined together. The fastening arms enter into a snap-action connection with the fastener part and clasp the fastener part in a connected condition to connect the gas bag module and the inflator mount with the steering wheel.

Claim 19 is patentable over Szigethy. Claim 19 clearly recites that the fastener arms are of the same continuous piece of material as the inflator mount and are not two pieces joined together. This is in contrast to Szigethy where the fastening arms 64 of the fastener part 12 are not formed of the same continuous piece of material as the inflator mount 24. (See e.g. Figs. 1-4). In addition, claim 19 recites that the fastener part is formed of the same continuous piece of material as the steering wheel and are not two pieces joined together. This is also in contrast to Szigethy where the fastener part 12 is not formed of the same continuous piece of material as the steering wheel 14.

The advantages of having the fastener part formed as one piece with the steering wheel and of having the fastening arms formed as one piece with the inflator mount are a rugged configuration and a reduced number of components. (Specification at page 3).

Further, the fasteners 12 of Szigethy are intended to be separate parts from the inflator mount and the steering wheel so that their generic construction can be adaptable for use with connecting different components such as connecting an air

bag module to the dashboard, headrest or seat back, instead of the steering wheel. (Szigethy col. 8, line 58- col.9 line 21).

Fig. 1 of the drawings has been amended to overcome the objection in Item 1 of the Office Action. The gas bag module has been labeled as well as the steering wheel. The gas bag module is disclosed in the specification on page 3 as being an integral part of the inflator mount 12. The steering wheel is disclosed also on page 3 of the specification as being an integral part of the fastener part 14. A reference number "13" has been added to the specification after steering wheel on page 3 to designate the steering wheel. A reference number "11" has been added to the specification to designate the gas bag module. Reference numbers "11" and "13" have been added to the drawings as well.

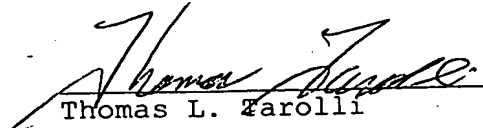
Attached is a marked-up version of the amended claims and specification presented in this Amendment. The attached page is captioned "Version With Markings To Show Changes Made."

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the above identified application is in condition for allowance, and allowance of the above-identified application is respectfully requested.

Serial No. 09/676,237

Please charge any deficiency or credit any overpayment in
the fees for this amendment to our Deposit Account
No. 20-0090.

Respectfully submitted,


Thomas L. Tarolli
Reg. No. 20,177

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VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

IN THE SPECIFICATION:

Page 3, the paragraph beginning at line 17 has been amended as follows:

Referring now to Fig. 1, there is illustrated a fastener 10 in accordance with the invention which connects a component, e.g., the inflator mount 12 of a gas bag module 11 to a fastener part 14 secured, e.g., to a steering wheel 13 by a snap-action connection. The fastener 10 comprises two fastening arms 16 preferably made of a plastics material which end in hooks 18. In the connected condition which is shown, the hooks 18 clasp the fastener part 14 in such a manner that the flat or slightly convex upper sides 20 contact a corresponding undercut, preferably concave surface area 22 on the fastener part 14. In this condition, the inflator mount 12 is locked in place against tension in the direction of the arrow A away from the steering wheel.



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PROPOSED DRAWING AMENDMENT

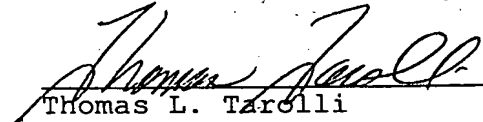
Sir:

Enclosed is a copy of original drawing Fig. 1 with red ink markings showing proposed changes to the drawings in the application for which approval of the Examiner is requested. The proposed drawing amendment consists of adding reference numbers 11 and 13 and lead lines to Fig. 1.

Serial No. 09/676,237

Please charge any deficiency or credit any overpayment in
the fees for this proposed drawing amendment to our Deposit
Account No. 20-0090.

Respectfully submitted,


Thomas L. Tarolli
Reg. No. 20,177

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FIG. 1

